

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO COMMANDANT NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 9319

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC

CINCPACREPPHIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANILA 6816

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA, PINS, PINT, MARR, RP

SUBJECT: NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE VISIT

1. SUMMARY. COMMANDANT OF NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE, MGEN HARRISON LOBDELL, AND SEVEN-MAN FIELD STUDIES GROUP (NO. 10) LED BY MR. NORRIS SMITH SPENT MAY 2-5 IN MANILA FOR DISCUSSIONS AT EMBASSY, CALLS ON PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY OFFICIALS, AND VISITS TO CLARK AIR FORCE BASE AND SUBIC BAY NAVAL BASE.

2. PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY OFFICIALS WERE PREOCCUPIED DURING PERIOD OF VISIT WITH NEGOTIATIONS ON MINDANAO. THIS ALMOST TOTAL ABSORPTION IN DIFFICULT MUSLIM IMBORGLO PRECLUDED NWC CALL ON PRESIDENT MARCOS AND WASHED OUT PLANNED CALLS ON FOREIGN SECRETARY ROMULO AND DEFENSE SECRETARY ENRILE. NEVERTHELESS, THE GROUP HAD USEFUL DISCUSSIONS WITH UNDERSECRETARY OF HOME DEFENSE, JOSE CRISOL, AND WITH ARMED FORCES (AFP) CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL ROMEO ESPINO. WITHIN THE
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EMBASSY, THERE WAS BROADRANGING DISCUSSION OF CURRENT POLITICAL AND SECURITY ISSUES, WITH PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE STRATEGIC, REGIONAL AND OPERATIONAL ROLES OF CLARK AIR FORCE BASE AND SUBIC BAY NAVAL BASE. END SUMMARY.

3. MORE NOTEWORTHY OBSERVATIONS BY DEFENSE UNDER-SECRETARY CRISOL IN COURSE OF 30-MINUTE CONVERSATION

WERE AS FOLLOW:

BASES. CRISOL SAID THAT THERE WOULD BE A HIATUS IN NEGOTIATIONS PENDING THE NAMING OF A NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE PHILIPPINES. ASKED ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE BASES TO THE PHILIPPINES, THE DEFENSE UNDER-SECRETARY SAID THAT THE GOP MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE NUMBERS OF FILIPINOS EMPLOYED AT THE BASES AND THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE HANDLED BY THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT IF THE BASES WERE CLOSED. ALSO IN THE ECONOMIC AREA, CRISOL OBSERVED THAT THE LARGE CLARK RESERVATION DISPLACES PRIME AGRICULTURAL LAND. ON A BROADER LEVEL, HE SAID THAT SOME PEOPLE (FILIPINOS) SAY THAT THE BASES DON'T HELP WITH INTERNAL INSURGENCIES. GOING FURTHER, THE DEFENSE UNDERSECRETARY SAID THAT IN TEN YEARS TIME, INTERNAL INSURGENCIES MAY BE THE PRIMARY PHILIPPINE SECURITY PROBLEM. CRISOL CLOSED HIS COMMENTS ON THE BASES WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT HE CONCURS WITH THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE REGION. CRISOL NOTED THAT IF SUCH A ROLE WERE SOMEHOW LEFT TO THE JAPANESE, THE PHILIPPINES WOULD HAVE PROBLEMS SINCE THE EXPERIENCE WITH THE "CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE" HAS NOT BEEN FOGOTTEN.

MINDANAO. CRISOL SAID THAT THE MINDANAO PROBLEM HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH RELIGION. HE SAID THAT THE CURRENT CEASEFIRE HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN THAT VIOLENCE HAS BEEN REDUCED BY MORE THAN 90 PERCENT. CRISOL SAID THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE ROUGHT BECAUSE THE MNLF DEMANDS ARE UNREALISTIC. CONFIDENTIAL

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ASKED ABOUT THE AFP'S PRIMARY MILITARY REQUIRMENT IN MINDANAO, CRISOL SAID THAT FAST, SHALLOW-DRAFT PATROL CRAFT WERE MOST NEEDED. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS PLENTY OF AMMUNITION.

EXTERNAL THREATS. CRISOL SAID THAT VIETNAM AND THE PRC DO NOT APPEAR TO POSE A REAL THREAT TO THE PHILIPPINES BUT THAT IT IS GOP PLICY TO BE PREPARED TO DEFEND ITSELF FROM ANY QUARTER. ASKED ABOUT THE POTENTIAL FOR MILITARY COOPERATION WITHIN ASEAN, CRISOL SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO DISCUSSION OF THIS BY THE ASEAN LEADERS AND THAT THE ASEAN EMPHASIS CONTINUES TO BE ECONOMIC.

HOME DEFENSE FUNCTION. CRISOL DESCRIBED THE VARIOUS

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO COMMANDANT NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE WASHDC

SECSTATE WASHDC 9320

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANILA 6816

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

ROLES OF THE AFP IN THE HOME DEFENSE AREA, SURVEYING
BRIEFLY CURRENT PROJECTS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, CIVIC ACTION,
ENGINEERING, VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR MUSTERED OUT DRAFTEES
AND ENLISTMENT OF FORMER MUSLIM INSURGENTS.

R. AFP CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL ROMEO ESPINO, MADE THE
FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS IN THE COURSE OF A 35-MINUTE
CONVERSATION.

MINDANAO. GENERAL ESPINO COMMENTED THAT THE "GREAT"
FOREIGN MINISTER OF LIBYA, ALI TURAYKI, HAD JUST LEFT
THE PHILIPPINES AND, UPON ARRIVING IN SINGAPORE,
ANNOUNCED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A JIHAD IN MINDANAO.
ESPINO SAID THAT THIS WAS ABSOLUTELY FOOLISH BECAUSE
THERE WERE NO RELIGIOUS FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE MINDANAO
PROBLEM. ESPINSO SAID THAT THE GOP HAD GRANTED AUTONOMY
AND THE DISPUTE WAS NOW ABOUT THE MECHANICS OF THAT
AUTONOMY. HE SAID THAT THE CEASEFIRE HAS REDUCED
VIOLENCE AND THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT A POLICY OF
ATTRACTIN WOULD BE KEY TO RESOLVING THE PROBLEM. HE SAID
THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS ONLY INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING THE
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WELL-BIEING OF THE PEOPLE. COMMENTING FURTHER ON THE
LIBYANS, ESPINSO SAID THAT THE "HARD LINE" OF ALI TURAYKI
AND THE "MORE CONCILITORY LINE" OF QADHAFI WERE PROBABLY
PART OF A CAREFULLY REHEARSED STRATEGEM WHICH THE GOP
SHOULD WATCH VERY CAREFULLY.

EXTERNAL THREATS. ASKED TO DESCRIBE EXTERNAL THREATS

TO THE PHILIPPINES, ESPINO SAID THAT RUSSIA IS THE KEY FACTOR. HE SAID THAT THE REAL PROBLEM IN THE PHILIPPINES IS MINDANAO, AND THAT IS INTERNAL.

BASES. ESPINO SAID THE PHILIPPINES NEEDS THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE HERE AS A STABILIZING FACTOR.

5. MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY. THE CHIEF OF STAFF SAID THAT THE PHILIPPINES WISHED THERE WAS A STRONGER ASSURANCE FROM THE USG THAT IT WOULD COME TO THE DEFENSE OF THE PHILIPPINES IN AN EMERGENCY. ESPINO SAID THAT THE CURRENT TREATY REQUIREMENT THAT THE U.S. RESPONSE "BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES" IS TROUBLESOME.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE REQUIREMENTS. ESPINO SAID THAT THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE NEEDS NEW AIRCRAFT AND THE NAVY NEEDS NEW SHIPS AND VESSELS. HE SAID THAT THE AFP WANTS TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT AND LOOKS TO THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS IN THAT REGARD.

JAPAN. THE CHIEF OF STAFF OBSERVED THAT JAPAN IS AN IMPORTANT COUNTRY AND THAT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME HAS PASSED SINCE WORLD WAR II. NEVERTHELESS, IN ESPINO'S VIEW, THE PHILIPPINES HAS NOT FORGOTTEN THOSE DIFFICULT DAYS.

VIETNAM. ESPINO REFERRED TO THE POTENTIAL MILITARY POWER OF VIETNAM AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT VIETNAM WOULD REMAIN PREOCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.

5. COMMENT. WHILE THERE WAS A GOOD MEASURE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS POSTURING IN SEVERAL OF THE COMMENTS BY CRISOL AND ESPINO, FOR EXAMPLE, THE RIDICULOUS ASSERTION THAT THERE WAS NO RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN THE MINDANAO PROBLEM, THERE WERE ELEMENTS WORTHY OF CONFIDENTIAL

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NOTE. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST WAS ESPINO'S REFERENCE TO AN APPARENT TURAYKI/QADHAFI STRATEGY WHICH BEARS WATCHING. THE AFP CHIEF CONVEYED A SENSE OF DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THE LIBYAN CONNECTION.
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